Sometime after 8 p.m., Mon., Oct. 5, our Oregon Nurses Association (ONA)/Coquille Valley Hospital (CVH) Negotiation Team and CVH were able to reach a tentative agreement on a financial package. As most people have heard, CVH is in an official financial turnaround status with the government, and negotiating fair wages for nurses was a challenge. However, our negotiating team worked very hard for CVH nurses and feels we have made a reasonable agreement, given the challenging circumstances. The team is also very close to having a tentative agreement with remaining language changes, and will have a redline agreement for you to review in the near future. The negotiating team is hopeful a ratification vote can take place by the end of October, or sooner. Below is a summary of the tentatively agreed economic package.

**SUMMARY**

- One year agreement to re-evaluate CVH financial performance
- 2% wage increase for steps 1-7; 2.5% wage increase for steps 8 and above. Increases top step wages to be more in line with market, as well as rewards longevity and recruiting experienced nurses
- Removal of A & B wages, (new increases above based on base + A&B rate)
- New weekend shift differential 75 cents an hour on ratification (current definition of weekend hours defined as a shift beginning and ending between 7 p.m. Friday and 7 p.m. Sunday)
- Increased night shift differential from $2.60 to $3.50 on ratification
- Full time FTE night shift nurses to receive a onetime lump sum payment of $350 and part time to receive $175
- Moves five nurses on the step scale, who were found by our negotiating team to have been misplaced on the wage scale (affected nurses will receive notification in the near future). 
- Decreased health reimbursement amount due to decreased health premiums and deductibles compared to past years (see article on Page 2)
- Increased paid time off (PTO) bank cap from 360 hours to 480 hours
- Training for mandatory certification will be provided locally by the hospital at least twice per year

Continued on Page 2
Tentative Agreement Reached

Changes to Reimbursement for Health Expenses

Last contract CVH nurses transitioned to the OEBB health plan. This change saved nurses a considerable amount on premiums and out-of-pocket expenses like deductibles. However, CVH continued to provide a $1,000 reimbursement when deductible went from $2,500 to $1,500. Given the hospital’s current financial state, they made a valid argument that the reimbursement was never intended to pay the majority of the deductible, but rather off-set the deductible to an affordable amount. On the old plan, nurses paid a deductible of up to $2,500 and the hospital reimbursed them $1,000 to equal a $1,500 out-of-pocket on deductible. This year, the deductible is set to be $1,600 and CVH will reimburse nurses $500 to equal a $600 total out of pocket on deductible. Health care premiums for the OEBB plan have also decreased this year.

Language in the Works

The following have been agreed to by our negotiating team and CVH administration in concept, and are working to finalize language:

- Creation of a professional nursing and labor committee (PNLC). Creates a committee that meets monthly to discuss professional nursing concerns, as well as any contract or other labor concerns. Equal representation by nursing and administration, creating an effective means to do proactive problem solving in the workplace.

- Removal of requirement for all nurses to obtain TEAM certification and only requires ACLS. Nurses will have six months to obtain certifications due to challenges in obtaining certifications in a rural area. Training for mandatory certification will be provided locally by the hospital at least twice per year.

- Allowing nurses not providing any direct patient care to be excused from the ACLS requirement, upon mutual written agreement with administration.

- Nurses in the bargaining unit having the opportunity to participate in developing any new service/department including but not limited to OB services and training programs through the nurse staffing committee.

- Contract currently allows for nurses to miss up to three mandatory meetings per calendar year, without penalty, when the absence is for a legitimate reason (such as being sick) and the nurse promptly reviews meeting minutes within 30 calendar days. Removal of all language that contradicts the above stated and confusing exceptions when a nurse can be disciplined for missing mandatory meetings.

403b Contributions Delayed

Last session, our negotiating team learned that employer contributions to retirement plans did not get deposited into accounts this August as planned and required by the contract. CVH administration sincerely apologizes for this delay and cites the amount of process improvement plans in progress for this delay. Jim Basch, chief financial officer, stated he wants to ensure the process and calculations are correct before making contributions to the plan. The hospital states they are committed to making each nurse whole and ensuring the proper amounts as well as any potential gains/losses is accounted for when deposits are made. The hospital anticipates these deposits to be made by the third week in October, if not sooner. Our negotiating team ensured a side letter of agreement was agreed to, documenting the agreement to work with the retirement plan administrators to make nurses whole.

Next Steps

Our negotiating team continues to work hard to finalize the remaining language pieces and will announce the draft redline agreement for your review. A ratification vote will be scheduled and nurses will be notified of when and where members in good standing can vote. Be sure to visit our bargaining unit webpage to stay up to date. Go to www.OregonRN.org and select Coquille Valley under Find My Bargaining Unit.